

Page 4
Serial No. 10/625,967
Response to Official Action

Remarks

The Examiner rejected claims 19-22 under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 876,341 to Forstner ("Forstner"). The Examiner and Applicant's attorney engaged in an Examiner's Interview on March 2, 2005 to discuss the teachings of Forstner and the Examiner agreed Forstner does not disclose, teach, or suggest application of the invention to a shoe. Based on the Examiner's Interview, foregoing amendments, and following remarks, Applicant submits that Forstner does not anticipate all elements of either of Applicant's independent claims. Moreover, the combination of Forstner with any of the previously cited art also does not arrive at Applicant's claimed invention. Hence, all claims should be allowed over all cited art and the rejections should be withdrawn.

All claims require a shoe with a clasp having an anchoring end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace of the shoe. All claims also require that the anchoring end have a first part and a second part where each are movable away and toward one another. All claims also require a receiver having a first receptacle for engaging the first part and a second receptacle for engaging the second part.

Forstner is directed to a rein coupling where reins are typically applied to horses. Forstner does not disclose, teach, or suggest application to shoes or shoes at any point in the patent. Because all of Applicant's claims are limited to an improved lacing system for a shoe, the rejections with respect to Forstner should be withdrawn and Applicant's pending claims should be allowed over Forstner.

U.S. Patent No. 5,379,496 to Krauss ("Krauss") is directed to tying two cords together and also does not mention shoes or application to shoes anywhere in the patent. Krauss lacks any disclosure, teaching, or suggestion for a clasp having an anchor-

Page 5
Serial No. 10/625,967
Response to Official Action

ing end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace of the shoe, the anchoring end having a first part and a second part where each are movable away and toward one another, and a receiver having a first receptacle for engaging the first part and a second receptacle for engaging the second part.

In order for a combination of references to be properly combined in a rejection under 35 USC § 103, there must be some teaching or suggestion in the references to make the suggested combination or that such combination is obvious to one skilled in the art. Absent the requisite teaching or suggestion or obviousness, the combination would be improper. As mentioned above, there is no teaching or suggestion in Forstner to be combined with cords and there is no teaching or suggestion in Krauss to be combined with reins. Neither Forstner nor Krauss relate to shoes.

Therefore, combining Krauss and Forstner would not be permitted because there is no teaching or suggestion in either reference to make the combination. Moreover, even if Krauss were combined with Forstner, the resulting combination would still not make mention of application to shoes, as required in all of Applicant's claims.

U.S. Patent No. 6,568,108 to Liu ("Liu") relates to shoes but does not disclose, teach, or suggest a clasp having an anchoring end and a lace end, the lace end adapted to hold a lace of the shoe, the anchoring end having a first part and a second part where each are movable away and toward one another, and a receiver having a first receptacle for engaging the first part and a second receptacle for engaging the second part.

As stated above, in order for Forstner and Liu to be properly combined, there must be some teaching or suggestion in the references to make the combination. Since Forstner makes no mention of shoes anywhere, and Liu makes no mention of reins

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Page 6

Serial No. 10/625,967

Response to Official Action

anywhere, the references are from different fields of endeavor and the combination would not be permitted under 35 USC § 103.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits all pending claims should be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

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